

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (currently amended): A transport system for transporting and handling microtiter plates, for use in high throughput screening, diagnosis and/or combinatorial chemistry, the transport system comprising:

modules, each with ~~devices~~ a device for at least one or more of the following: preparing specimens, introducing specimens, optical readout, plate storage, and ~~devices for further processing steps or readout steps; and wherein within each module is at least one revolving table having two plate positions; and~~

at least one central transport system, which is separate from the modules and for asynchronous plate transfer asynchronously transfers the plates between individual modules~~{{;}}~~;

wherein each of the modules includes a respective internal transport system which transports plates between the central transport system and the respective device of each module, each internal transport system including at least one revolving table having two plate locations for holding two respective plates;

wherein ~~one of the~~ at least one revolving tables ~~table~~ of each module functions as an input and output buffer to transfer the plates to and from the at least one central transport system~~{{;}}~~

wherein each module further comprises an internal transport system for transporting the microtiter plates between the different devices, the internal transport system transporting the microtiter plates by means of the revolving tables and sliding units.

Claims 6-7 (cancelled)

Claim 8 (currently amended): The transport system according to claim 5~~[[,]]~~_;

wherein at least one of the modules is connected with a local computer with externally standardized interface and the transport and/or processing and/or loading and/or optical readout are/is controlled by a master computer via these interfaces.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The transport system according to claim 5, including a sensor which detects whether or not the respective side of the revolving table is unoccupied to ensure that no collisions occur so that a microtiter plate can be loaded for return transport.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The transport system according to claim 5, including means for providing a clocked operation so that a revolving table is always inserting one microtiter plate and guiding out another microtiter plate.